Medical.

Next, what about the administration of the Medical Department? Here we see favouritism ripening into nepotism. This Departmental Head seems to have wider powers of action than any of the other Heads. It is only the other day, Sir, that he usurped the powers of the Diwan by expunging certain remarks made by a Member of this House in a Visitors' Book at Kuriyarkutti Dispensary, and by issuing a general circular to his subordinates prohibiting them from showing the Visitors' Book to that Member. And why? Because the remarks of the Member did not reflect much credit on the administration of this Department. Has he (Chief Medical and Sanitary Officer) not thereby insulted this House? Yet, was there any action taken by the Diwan? Does not that insult continue to sting us still, and proclaim that official autocracy knows no personal honour? Why was no action taken by the Government for this unwarranted act of the Medical Head without Government's sanction? I pause for an answer. What would be the result, if Departmental Heads are allowed in this manner to go unchecked?

Public Works.

Our P. W. D. is not in any way more encouraging. There we find big works involving thousands of rupees being given, without tenders being called for, to persons of the Chief Engineer's choice, perhaps to consistently observe the principle of favouritism adverted to above.

This is the state in which we are now placed, and the people who have sent us as their representatives to the Council look to us for the betterment of these matters.

I close these general remarks leaving my colleagues in my Party to deal with the budget in detail, and reserving my further remarks to the time when the various items would be moved before this House.

Mr. C. Barton Wright.—Mr. President, Sir, we have met here to-day to discuss the first budget of the new Council. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Finance Member on his clear and careful analysis of the estimates presented to this House; but I must confess that the budget itself strikes me as unsatisfactory in several fundamental features.

In the first place, the policy of accumulating surpluses year after year, without making adequate provision for a proper system of irrigation and other development works, is bound to produce baneful consequences. At the present moment, we have a net surplus of Rs. 68,65,438 which may amount up to Rs. 80 lakhs at the end of 1104.

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The Finance Member says that, out of this surplus, Rs. 2,41,755 lie invested in the Cochin Tanneries. This amount has been allowed to lie as dead Capital for the past seven years. The interest so far lost would itself amount to one lakh of rupees. And is there any chance of recovering the Capital even? I understand that the question of either working or winding up the concern was referred to the Economic Development Board. I shall be very glad if the Chairman of the Board, in the course of the budget discussion, will inform the House if any decision has been arrived at.

Another investment out of the net surplus is the 3½ lakhs of rupees advanced to the Sitaram Spinning and Weaving Mills, Ltd., Trichur. I would like to know if the security furnished in the shape of the Mill buildings, Machinery and Plant, after deducting proper depreciation charges, is an adequate guarantee for the easy recovery of the loan, whenever the Government think it necessary to call it up. I have a cut motion under this head, and I shall give details, when the discussion on this item comes up.

Speaking of General Administration, I have to bring to the notice of the Government the urgent necessity of carrying out some of the important recommendations of the Special Finance Committee, from the beginning of the next official year. I find on page 84 of the budget the allotment of Rs. 2 lakhs as a lump sum provision for the reorganisation of Departments. I do not know whether the final consideration of the report will be carried out without any further delay, or whether it will be indefinitely postponed, which appears to be the *mamool* in this State. I hope that the resolution standing in the name of Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar, the Member for Vellarappilli, will be accepted, and a special meeting of this Council will be held early in 1104 to discuss fully the Committee's report. But, pending this final consideration, I request the Government to accept such of the changes as have been unanimously accepted by the Special Finance Committee, viz., the enhancement of the pay of the subordinate officials, separation of the Panchayat Department, the establishment of a third division in the P. W. D., and an increased allotment for irrigation.

Further the lump sum allotment of Rs. 2 lakhs for the reorganisation of Departments appears to me insufficient. I think at least another lakh of rupees should also be provided, and the disbursement should take effect from Chingam 1104, and payment should not be deferred until the end of the year, as has been done in the case of the last allotment of one lakh for menials.

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Another defect in the General Administration is that the spirit of enterprise and encouraging help in the development of the material resources of the State are wanting. This is especially seen in the working of the Agricultural Department. So far as cultivation is concerned, the First Council has been hammering at the Government that increased facilities in irrigation should be provided for without further loss of precious time. Irrigation is the cry of the hour. In his dissenting minute attached to the main report of the Special Finance Committee, the Diwan Peishkar, who is an authority on the subject, says that "no improvement worth the name in the economic conditions of the agricultural and rural population of the State is possible, without a systematic and intensive programme for the development of irrigation."

Now, I ask, Sir, is the expenditure of Rs. 96,632 in the current year, and an allotment of Rs. 1,69,715, for 1104, sufficient even for a small beginning in this direction? Several lakhs of rupees are necessary for the financing of the new irrigation works, especially in view of the fact that no capital expenditure has been incurred under this head for the last 20 years.

In this connection, I am constrained to observe that the Special Finance Committee does not seem to have carefully studied the problem, as I do not find anywhere in the report a regular programme of irrigation works recommended. I am of opinion that a Committee of this House must be appointed, with the Diwan Peishkar as Chairman, to investigate this question. For the proper investigation and carrying out of works and improvements, which would involve a capital outlay of many lakhs of rupees, the services of a full-time expert with experience should be secured. And I don't think, we can do better than retain the services of our present Acting Chief Engineer, who holds a long and good record in irrigation and road works in our Sister State of Travancore.

In British India and elsewhere, specialists are always engaged in carrying out special works. If the services of the Acting Chief Engineer are to be retained, the opening of the Ghaut Road, which requires special engineering skill, should also be entrusted to him.

If these major works of improvement, which will require much time for personal and close supervision, were to be thrust on the permanent Head of the Department, he would be seriously handicapped in the discharge of his ordinary duties, and in the end both permanent and special work would suffer.

The absence of irrigation facilities is not the only obstacle

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to agricultural development in the State. Farming, to be profitable, must be conducted on scientific and economic lines; and this is what the Central Farm and the Departmental experts are expected to teach the ryots in general, but, unfortunately, the Central Farm is at present worked neither scientifically nor economically. How can you expect the experts to do any useful work unless they are given a Laboratory? Only by this reason they would be able to find out scientific methods suitable to local needs. In the absence of a Laboratory, the Entomologist, Micologist and the Chemist are actually doing the work of Farm Maistries. To cultivate 230 acres in the Central Farm we are now spending about Rs. 13,000 as overhead and supervision charges. This works out at Rs. 56—8—0 per acre, an incredibly high figure. In the Vaniampara Estate, the supervision charges including the remuneration of the Managing Agent is only Rs. 7—8—0 per acre. Nor is this all. We are spending Rs. 15,000 to supervise labour costing only Rs. 9,000 a year. And if we work out the total annual expenditure on the Farm, it will come to Rs. 180 per acre. Now Sir, if our agriculturists are to carry on their farming on these lines, they will soon have to give up the spade and the plough, and take to some other source of earning their livelihood. It is high time, therefore, that the Government appoint a Committee, consisting of the elected Members of this House, to advise the Agricultural Department to put the Central Farm on a sound and useful footing.

Sir, the rural population of the State suffer also from the unsatisfactory working of the Panchayat Department. Now the cry everywhere in India is 'Rural Reconstruction', and it is a pity that the Cochin Government have not yet begun to tackle earnestly the question of improving the villages.

At present, the Panchayat Department is unable to do this work properly, because it is amalgamated with the Agricultural Department. The first Council realised the seriousness of this mistake, and time and again insisted upon the separation of the Panchayat from the Agricultural Department. The Special Finance Committee has now endorsed this opinion, and I am sure that the Government will bring about this very necessary and desirable change from the beginning of 1104.

Another matter, in which I am more directly interested, is the improvement of our roads. Several of our roads are a disgrace to any civilised Government. The Vaniampara Road, which has to meet the heaviest traffic not only in this State, but perhaps in the whole of South India, is especially in a deplorable condition. When regard is had to the fact that the linking

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together of places by a system of good roads is the *sine quo non* of agricultural and industrial progress, the seriousness of the Government negligence in this respect can well be gauged by the House. I avail myself of this opportunity to inform the House and the Government the vast possibilities of the Nelliampathy Hills for Tea planting, which would considerably add to the revenues of the State, and will provide employment for a large number of labourers. In the past, the one great obstacle was the absence of a road up the Ghauts ; and I am glad that the Government has at last taken in hand the execution of this important work. I hope that the work will be pushed forward, and the Ghaut Road will soon become *a fait accompli*. I shall be much obliged to the Engineering Member if he, in the course of his reply at the end of the General Discussion, will enlighten the House how far this work has progressed, and whether it is likely to be completed by the end of the financial year. The provision of Rs. 25,000 for 1104 is quite inadequate to do any substantial work in this direction.

Before concluding, I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Sheik Abdul Qadir, our popular Commissioner of Police, who is shortly reverting to the British Service. His services were requisitioned at a critical period, when communal feelings ran very high, and the atmosphere was surcharged with mutual suspicion and antagonism. Thanks to his sound common sense, tact, and genial ways, and by stern and impartial enforcement of law, whenever necessary, he was able to inspire confidence and respect for peace and order in the State ; and the Department, under his guidance, has improved in efficiency and discipline. The fact that the Legislative Council has all along been sparing in its criticism of the Police Department is a further proof of the popular appreciation of the Commissioner's work, and I feel sure that he will carry with him the pleasantest recollections of the happy relations, which existed all along between himself and the public of Cochin, both socially and officially.

Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar.—Sir, no Government (whatever be the name by which it goes, that is, absolute monarchy, limited monarchy, republicanism, democracy, etc.) can claim justification for its existence, unless it actually promotes the welfare and happiness of the people, committed to its care. This is a well-known truism. It is but natural that people desire to interest themselves more and more in the matter of bringing about their own welfare and prosperity. I think, Sir, this desire on the part of the people at large is the real cause of the

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present cry for self-determination everywhere. Our small State is no exception to this growing tendency. Our far-sighted and benevolent Ruler (may he live long!) has well appreciated this growing tendency on the part of the subjects of this State to directly associate themselves more and more in all matters of Government. This appreciation has taken a tangible form in Regulation III of 1098, by which His Highness has definitely declared himself in favour of Responsible Government. That Regulation, it may be stated, is a great step towards the achievement of Responsible Government in the State. His Highness' subjects are given the power to send in their representatives to the Legislative Council, constituted under this Regulation. These representatives can get information on all matters of public importance, by putting questions and eliciting answers to them. They can send up resolutions to the Government, which the Government is expected to respect. They are given the power of making laws. They are given the power of controlling the purse also to some extent. I may at once add that I am not unaware of the limitations imposed upon the Council by the said Regulation. But these powers, I think, if wisely and properly used, can, and will bring about to a great extent the desired end.

But there is one regrettable feature in the actual working of the constitution under this Regulation. Though the intention of His Highness is clear and unambiguous, his advisors and other officers, who are carrying on the actual administration of the State, do try to put all possible obstacles in the way of the chosen representatives doing their part of the work to the best of their ability. The non-official section of this House is looked upon with suspicion. Its sincerity of purpose is sometimes even questioned. When we are trying to get information on any matter, all devices are resorted to, to defeat our object, especially if the information would expose the blunders committed by the Government. Even innocent questions are sometimes disallowed.

Sir, I have heard some people remark, the official section of this House not excepted, that this House is a costly farce, and serves no useful purpose, that its Members invariably resort to obstructive tactics, and that their aim is only to oppose the Government in all matters. Well, Sir, you are mistaken. The position is entirely the reverse. You, Members of the Government, are absolutely unwilling to place any trust in us. You want to keep us at a distance. In fact, you are very reluctant to take us into your confidence, and to share your responsibilities with us, the chosen representatives of the people.

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It is high time, Sir, that you look at the thing from a different standpoint. The angle of vision has to be changed. Take us into your confidence. Try to respect the wishes of the chosen representatives of the people. Do not try to foist your rule-making powers and the like against us. Permit me, Sir, to say that we have a common object, namely, the promotion of the happiness and prosperity of the people of this State. We are here, Sir, to make an honest endeavour to achieve this one common object. Let there be a spirit of comradeship between us, the Members of Government on the one hand, and the non-official section of this House on the other, and I am sure this House shall not be the costly farce it is sometimes characterised to be.

I regret I have to remark that, during the last three years of the existence of this Council, there has grown a strong feeling amongst the chosen representatives of the people, that their legitimate aspirations are being thwarted and smothered by the official section in every possible manner. To you, Hon'ble Members on the opposite side, I can only pray that you should try to remove that unhappy feeling. Let us not look at each other with suspicion. Let us all put our shoulders together, and let us all try to work for the achievement of our common object. This much with regard to the general aspects of the administration.

Coming to the details, I think I would do well to say a few words on the most important Departments of the Government. I would like to take up *Agriculture and Panchayats* first.

Agriculture.

Strictly speaking, there is no particular reason why these two Departments should be grouped together, except perhaps for the reason that both these are development Departments, Agriculture trying to develop the resources of the land, and Panchayats trying to develop the resources of the people to govern themselves. It is expressed in some quarters 'that our Agricultural Department has been organised and developed on too ambitious lines for the resources and requirements of the State'. I for one, cannot for a moment subscribe to this view. Our country is pre-eminently agricultural. Every facility has to be provided for its improvement. New methods of cultivation have to be introduced. There is much scope for research work. Demonstrations have to be started in every part of the State. The ryot has to be taught how to increase the out-put from the land with the minimum expenditure. Our harvests entirely depend upon the monsoon. They fail very often, and our harvests also fail consequently. Irrigation schemes have to be organised and worked on systematic lines. In fact, our

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